SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# Grown in SC

Issue № 2 | 2022

## Keeping the Cows Home

*INNOVATION IS THE WAY FORWARD FOR SC'S DAIRY INDUSTRY*

## Garden Variety

*GREG BROWN WANTS HIS CUSTOMERS TO HAVE FUN WITH THEIR FOOD*

## My Farm to Table Journey

*CHEF BRANDON VELIE ON HOW HE LEARNED THE VALUE OF LOCAL FOOD*

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*Greg Brown of Greenleaf Farms in Hopkins, SC, shows off a purple daikon radish.*

*Photos by Stephanie Finnegan*

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*A cotton field in Bishopville, SC.*

**MORE WAYS TO CONNECT WITH SC AGRICULTURE**

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## MEET SOUTH CAROLINA'S COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

**NAME:** Hugh E. Weathers

**WIFE:** Blanche Weathers

**CHILDREN:** 3 sons – Gill, Edward and Julius

**GRANDCHILDREN:** 5

**ALMA MATER:** University of South Carolina

**MOST REWARDING CROP TO GROW:** Cotton

**FAVORITE FRUIT:** Apple

**FAVORITE VEGETABLE:** Collards

**FAVORITE SONG TO SING IN CHURCH:** "Be Still My Soul"

**FAVORITE SONG TO SING IN THE TRUCK:** "Feelin' Good Again" by Robert Earl Keen

Formerly in the dairy business, Commissioner Weathers is a fourth-generation farmer who now grows peanuts, corn, cotton, and other crops on his family farm in Bowman, South Carolina. Since taking office in 2004, he has led the creation of the Certified South Carolina branding program to help consumers identify and purchase South Carolina products, while increasing market opportunities for farmers across the state. Under his guidance, the department also introduced the Agribusiness Center for Research and Entrepreneurship (ACRE), which funds research and promotes entrepreneurship to nurture agribusiness within the state.


Grown in SC

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LOANS FOR LAND, FARMS AND HOMES

## Ag Facts

# Growing All the Time

*AGRICULTURE IN SOUTH CAROLINA*

**24,791**
Farms

**4.7 Million**
Acres of Land Farmed

## Top 10 Agricultural Commodities

### № One
**BROILERS**

A broiler is any chicken raised for meat – and it's by far the highest value farm product in South Carolina, around a $1 billion industry.

### № Two
**TURKEYS**

South Carolina ranks 8th in the nation in turkey production, raising mostly large tom (male) turkeys.

### № Three
**CORN**

Field corn grown in South Carolina is used in food ingredients like corn starch and corn syrup, as well as in fuel, plastics and animal feed. South Carolina farmers harvested 390,000 acres in 2021.

### № Four
**CATTLE & CALVES**

The beef industry is a cornerstone of South Carolina agriculture, where farmers marketed around 170,000 head of cattle last year.

### № Five
**SOYBEANS**

We're not talking edamame here – soybeans grown in South Carolina are used for oil, animal feed and much more. Palmetto State farmers harvested 370,000 acres of soybeans in 2021.

### № Six
**COTTON**

South Carolina farmers grow Upland cotton, much of it sold on the international market for use in textiles. Cotton acreage for 2021 was 205,000 acres.

### № Seven
**CHICKEN EGGS**

Between eggs, broilers, and turkeys, the poultry industry is integral to South Carolina agriculture.

### № Eight
**PEANUTS**

South Carolina has become a leader in peanut production. Farmers in the state harvested 66,000 acres last year.

### № Nine
**FLORICULTURE**

From sod farms to cut flowers to nursery plants, floriculture is a more than a budding industry in South Carolina.

### № Ten
**TOBACCO**

Historically among the most important crops in the state, tobacco is grown mostly in the Pee Dee region. Farmers harvested 7,600 acres of tobacco in 2021 in South Carolina.

Agribusiness is SC's
**#1 Industry**

Accounts for
**246,957 Jobs**

**$46.2 Billion**
Total Economic Impact

**$9.6 Billion**
in Annual Labor Income

## Other Key Industries

### PEACHES

Most years, South Carolina grows more peaches than any other Eastern state, and is second in the nation only to California. Small, bright and juicy, South Carolina peaches measure extremely high on the Brix scale, a measure of sweetness.

### WATERMELONS

With more than 600 farms growing watermelons statewide, this tasty symbol of summer is a beloved South Carolina crop. Watermelons stop ripening as soon as they're picked, so buying local matters!

### HORSES

South Carolina's equine industry contributes nearly $2 billion and 29,000 jobs annually to the state's economy. This historically important industry encompasses competitions, recreational riding, working animals, and more.

## National Fruit & Vegetable Production Rankings

South Carolina is the top producer of turnip greens in the nation. Here are some of our other national fresh produce rankings.

**№ One**
TURNIP GREENS

**№ Two**
COLLARD GREENS
KALE
MUSTARD GREENS
PEACHES

**№ Five**
OKRA

**№ Six**
HONEYDEW
PEAS, GREEN

**№ Seven**
BROCCOLI

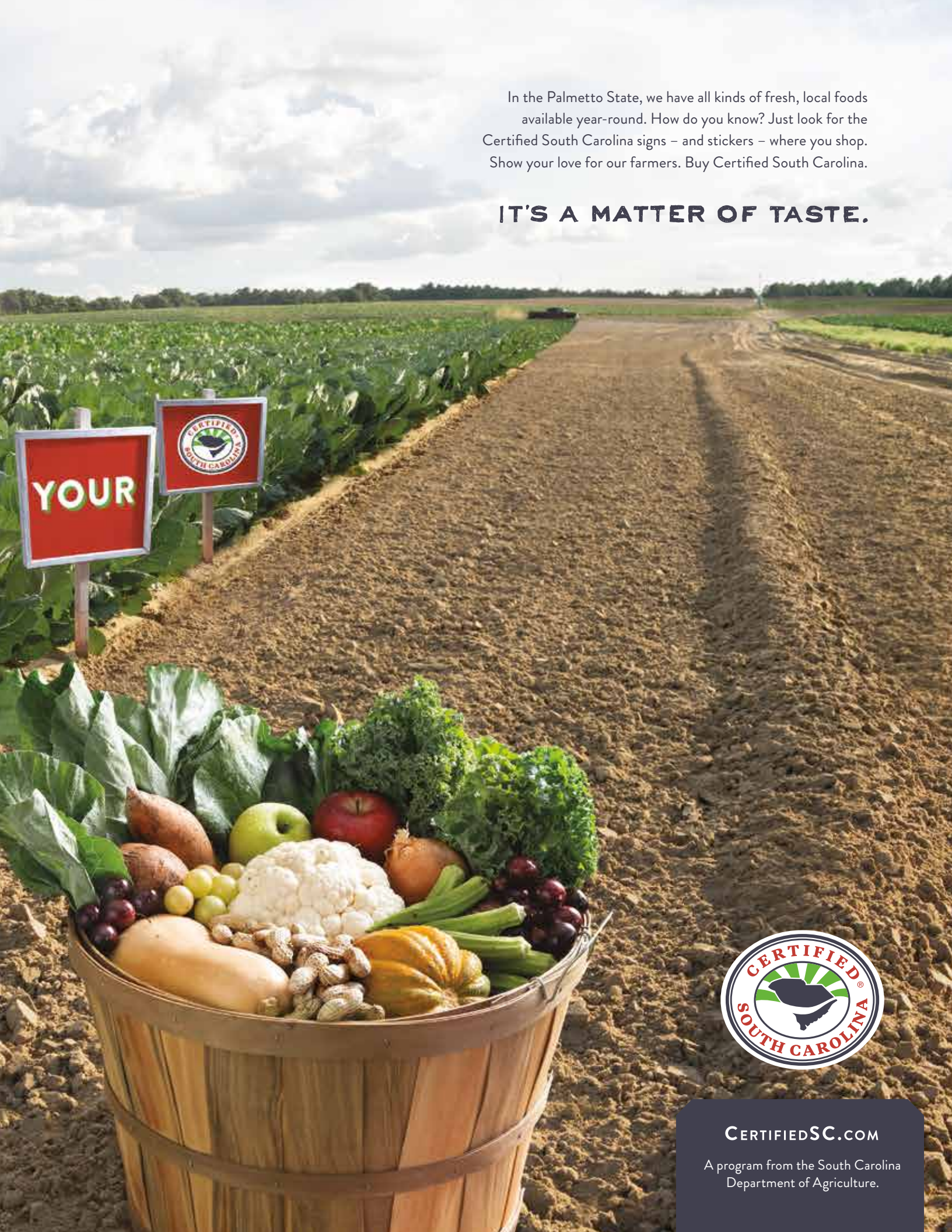
**№ Eight**
SUMMER SQUASH
SWEET POTATOES
WATERMELON

**№ Nine**
BELL PEPPERS
CANTALOUPE

**№ Ten**
TOMATOES

*Sources: Census of Agriculture (USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2017); USDA Economic Research Service; The Economic Impact of Agribusiness in South Carolina and the Certified South Carolina Grown Campaign (Von Nessen, 2020)*


COME
AND
GET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## Eat Local

# What's In Season

Eating locally means eating seasonally. In South Carolina we're blessed with diverse geography and seasonal variation, making for a full year of delicious local foods.

CERTIFIED SC GROWN

IT'S A MATTER OF TASTE.

## Winter

| DECEMBER | JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH |
|---|---|---|---|
| Apples | | | |
| Arugula | | | |
| Beets | | | |
| Broccoli | | | |
| Cauliflower | | | |
| Collards | | | |
| Fennel | | | |
| Kale | | | |
| Leeks | | Leeks | |
| Lettuces | | | Lettuces |
| Microgreens | | | |
| Mushrooms | | | |
| Mustard & Turnip Greens | | | |
| Napa Cabbage | | | |
| Parsley | | | Parsley |
| Pecans | | | |
| Radishes | | Radishes | |
| Sweet Potatoes | | | |
| Turnips | | | |
| | Cabbage | | |
| | | | Asparagus |
| | | | Bok Choy |
| | | | Kohlrabi |
| | | | Strawberries |
| | | | Swiss Chard |

# Spring

| APRIL | MAY |
|---|---|
| Arugula | |
| | Broccoli |
| | Cauliflower |
| Fennel | |
| Blueberries | |
| Onions | |
| Peas (Sugar/Snap) | |
| | Basil |
| | Beans (Snap/Pole) |
| | Cucumbers |
| | Potatoes |
| | Summer Squash |
| | Sweet Corn |
| | Zucchini |

# Summer

| JUNE | JULY | AUGUST |
|---|---|---|
| | Parsley | |
| | | Sweet Potatoes |
| Blackberries | | |
| Cantaloupe | | Cantaloupe |
| Eggplant | | |
| Herbs | | |
| Okra | | |
| Peaches | | |
| Peppers | | |
| Plums | | |
| Tomatoes | | |
| Watermelon | | |
| | Butter Beans | |
| | | Figs |
| | | Muscadine Grapes |
| | | Peanuts (Green) |
| | | Squash (Hard) |

# Autumn

| SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER |
|---|---|---|
| Apples | | |
| Arugula | | |
| | Beets | |
| | Broccoli | |
| | | Cauliflower |
| | Collards | |
| | Fennel | |
| | | |
| | Lettuces | |
| | | |
| | Mustard & Turnip Greens | |
| | | Napa Cabbage |
| Parsley | | |
| | Pecans | |
| Radishes | | |
| | | |
| | | Cabbage |
| Bok Choy | | |
| Kohlrabi | | |
| Swiss Chard | | |
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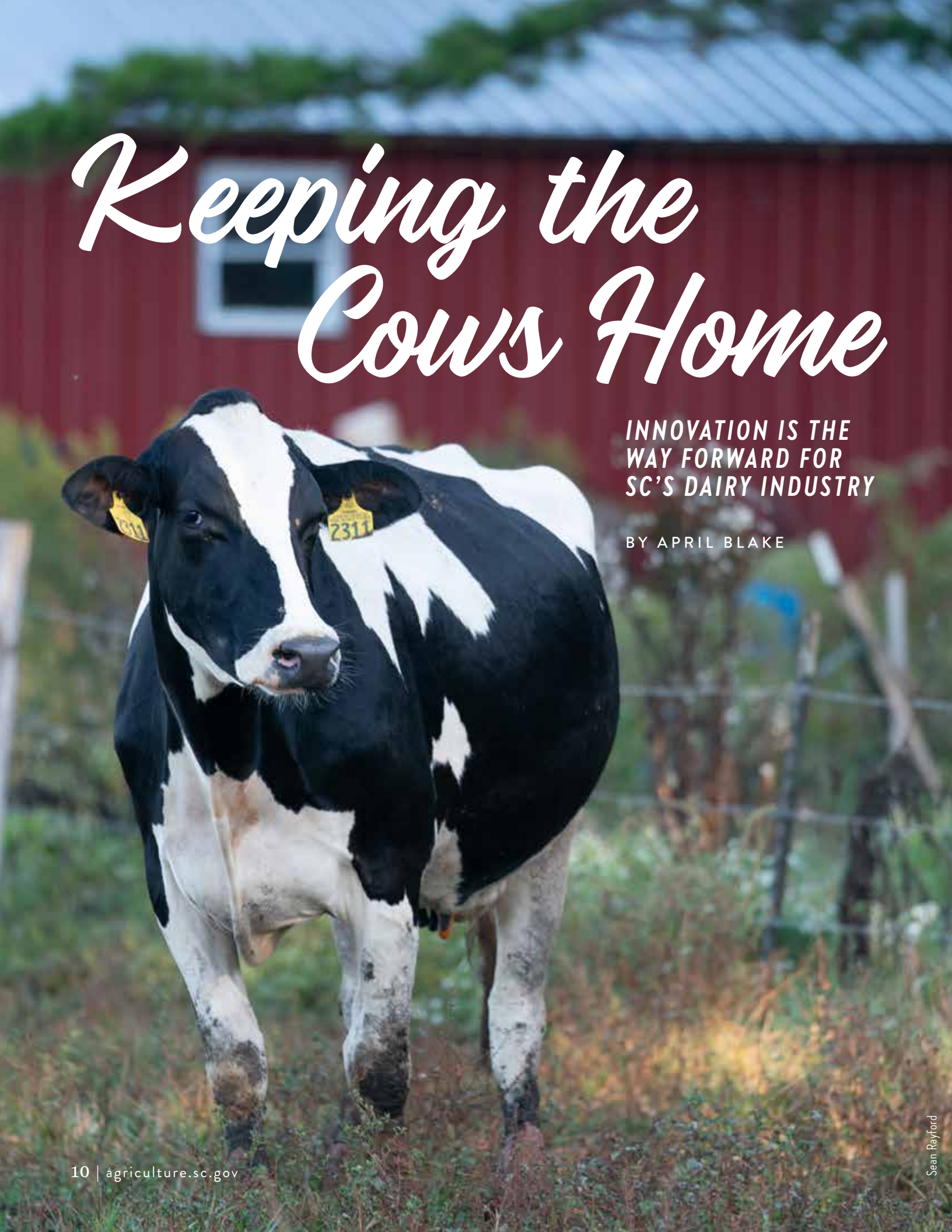
| | | |
| | | |
| Cucumbers | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Tomatoes | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Pears | | |

# Keeping the Cows Home

## INNOVATION IS THE WAY FORWARD FOR SC'S DAIRY INDUSTRY

BY APRIL BLAKE




Sean Rayford


Waylon Nance runs with a bottle of chocolate milk after morning chores at Nance Dairy Farm. **OPPOSITE:** Nance Dairy Farm.

The dairy industry in South Carolina has changed a lot over the years. Children used to have a much easier time spotting cows from the interstate as they sped by in the back seats of cars. Dairy cows were once more common across the state, gently munching on grass before being led to the barn to be milked by hand.

But in 2021 there are fewer than 30 active dairies across the whole state. In many cases, the ones who remain are the ones who've innovated, who looked to greener pastures beyond just selling milk to commercial distributors to make their living. Co-ops, creameries, agritourism, robotics — and sometimes a combination of all these — are keeping cows and dairy farmers in business in South Carolina.

In traditional dairy farming, milk is sold as a commodity and there is a federal pricing system. It changes based on supply and demand, and farmers don't always know how much they will get paid. The milk gets shipped in a tanker truck to a major manufacturer like Borden or Pet. Two-thirds of the value of the milk comes after it leaves the farm — through processing, packaging, distribution, etc. — and the farmer generally only gets about 35 cents to the dollar.

Given these ups and downs, it's obvious why dairies are either disappearing or changing their business models to find other ways to supplement their livelihoods.

"Back in the day, I can recall 30 dairies in my home county of Orangeburg and over 300 in the state," says South Carolina Department of Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers, who is a former dairy farmer himself. This dwindling number of dairies is typical in the Southeast, he says. Many dairy operations have consolidated, so there are fewer overall. Some dairies are growing in size, but that kind of operation often requires multiple


Sean Rayford

generations of family members committed to the kind of labor output dairy farming takes.

The pressures of dairy farming stem from a simple biological fact: Cows have to be milked regularly or they'll stop producing milk.

The nature of dairy farming means it is a 24/7 operation, which can take a toll on a family, says Weathers.

Caci Nance of Nance Creamery in York is no stranger to this feeling. She, her husband, and her in-laws operate their dairy and creamery with their family's labor. Sustaining two households on what they were producing at their dairy was getting unsustainable, which is why they decided it was time to innovate.

There are several ways farmers have grown beyond the typical commercial dairy operation, though many still include the traditional ways in their business models. Selling milk directly to customers, selling niche products, and building or expanding creameries have all helped dairies grow.

Lowcountry Creamery in Bowman is one of the more well-known creameries among the state's restaurant industry insiders. Products like their chocolate milk, crème fraîche, yogurts, and cultured buttermilk are distributed through the food hub GrowFood Carolina to customers like coffee shops and high-end restaurants.

"Coffee shops are a big deal for us because they can see the value in a higher quality milk," says Patrick Myers, the owner of Lowcountry Creamery.

Lowcountry Creamery's products can be found in places like Coastal Coffee Roasters in Summerville, or for sale on the shelves at Primal Gourmet in West Columbia. Their creamery is undergoing an enormous expansion to try to better serve the demand for their products across more of the state.

At Nance Creamery, the Nance family produces whole milk, chocolate milk, and buttermilk to sell to consumers through nearby retailers. Caci Nance says they hope to expand to additional dairy products soon, like butter, sour cream, yogurt, and possibly even ice cream.

Lowcountry Creamery, Nance Farm,


Sean Rayford


Milky Way Farm


Milky Way Farm

**OPPOSITE PAGE**
William Nance cleans equipment at the milking parlor.

**TOP LEFT**
Caci Nance says her family business is adapting by expanding its product line.

**BOTTOM LEFT**
Iris Peeler Barham, LD Peeler, and Davis Peeler operate Milky Way Farm.

**ABOVE RIGHT**
Milky Way Farm in Anderson is one of three SC dairies or creameries to win grants through the Agribusiness Center for Research and Entrepreneurship.

and another dairy called Milky Way Farm have all been awarded grants and business mentoring through the South Carolina Department of Agriculture's Agribusiness Center for Research and Entrepreneurship. The ACRE program rewards entrepreneurial ideas with funding and support — and dairies and creameries are an arena where such innovation is important to the future of South Carolina farming.

Agritourism, including farm tours, is also growing in popularity across the state. And as dairy farmers open creameries, they are interested in the role agritourism can play in their business. Myers says he loves talking to customers and showing them where the milk is made, and can't wait to get going on agritourism soon.

"It's part of our plan, but not right off the bat," says Myers. "It's almost inevitable; you can't not do it."

But not all dairy farms, with the cows and tons of moving machinery for milking, are able to conduct farm tours.

"We don't have a full-time staff, so our 120 to 150 cows take up all of our time," says Nance.

The staffing required to milk cows has led some South Carolina dairies toward automation. Recently, Hickory Hill Farm in Edgefield opened the first privately owned robotic milking parlor in South Carolina. In robotic facilities, cows set their own schedules, visiting the automatic milkers when they feel ready, which usually results in higher levels of milk production with less human labor required.

Still other dairy farmers are relying more on direct sales. Milky Way Farm, in Anderson, has a few simple outlets for their milk. Raw milk that is bottled on the farm is sold directly to the

consumer via retail stores in the I-85 corridor, through a self-serve cooler on the farm, or directly from the farmer on his weekly routes.

"I find it fascinating that people will come get two gallons of milk at the same time every other week from my dad versus going to the retail store," Iris Barham says with a laugh. Their dairy operation is also very family-oriented, run by three family members and a few employees.

Barham says they are looking to diversify their offerings since the raw milk market can have a slower pace. However, as one of the few dairies that sells A2 milk, they have a sought-after, niche product. A2 milk comes from specific cows whose milk lacks a protein so people who are traditionally lactose-intolerant can enjoy cow's milk.

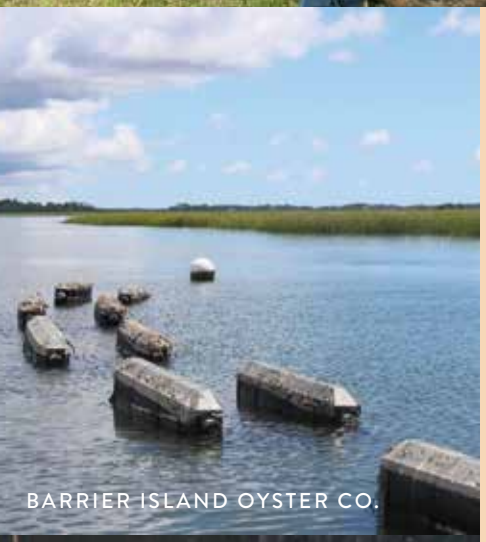
Despite the challenges that are out there for these impassioned cow farmers, the dairy industry in the state is doing pretty well, says Commissioner Weathers.

"Dairy producers are some of the most efficient farmers you can imagine," Weathers says. "What Lowcountry Creamery and others are doing is making the investments to gain a greater share of the retail value of milk, and if they gain more of that value-add, I think their chances of success will improve."

The opportunities seem to be there. With the kind of creativity, commitment to innovation, and love for their herds that these independent farmers have, there's no reason to worry the cows won't stay home in South Carolina.


Sean Rayford


CRESCENT FARM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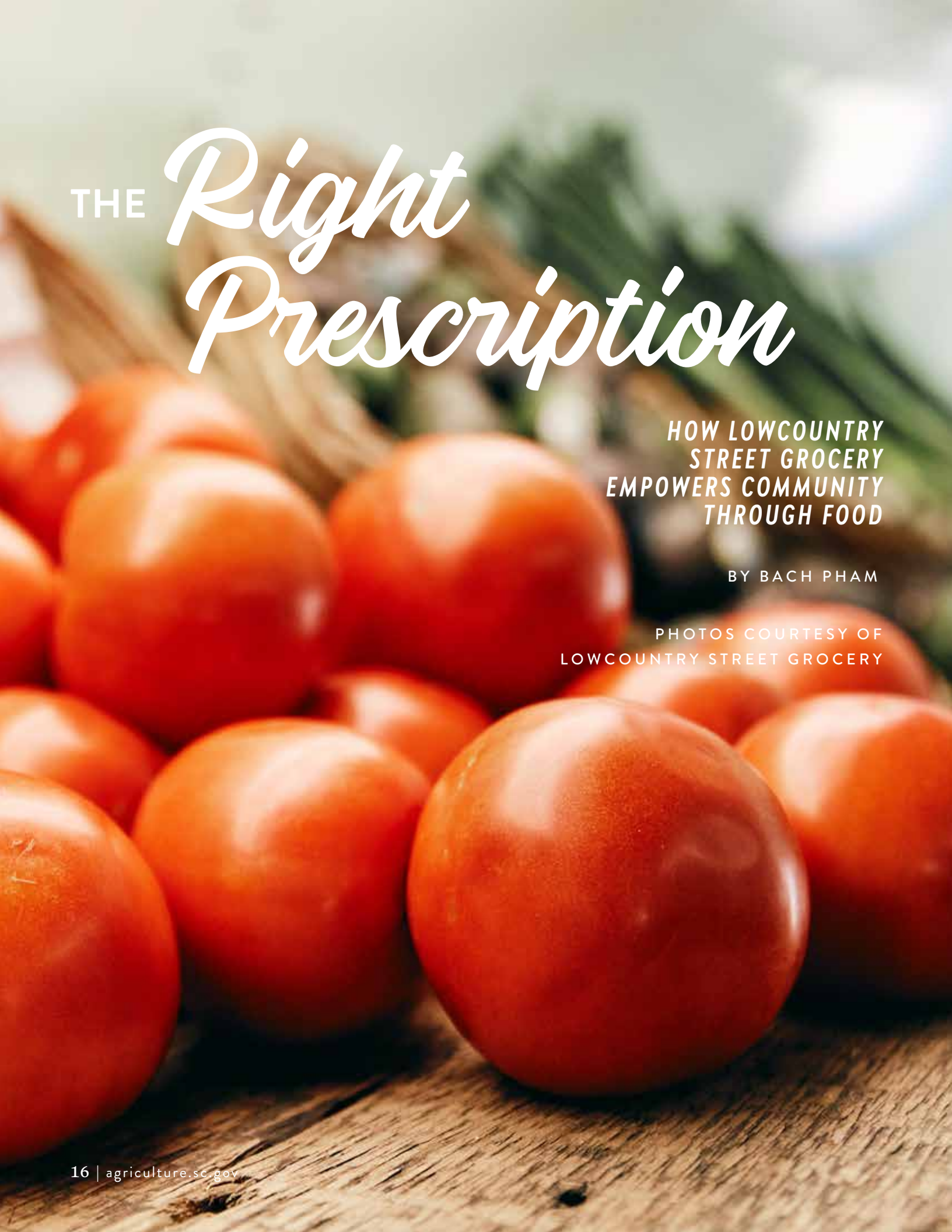

# THE *Right Prescription*

## HOW LOWCOUNTRY STREET GROCERY EMPOWERS COMMUNITY THROUGH FOOD

BY BACH PHAM

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LOWCOUNTRY STREET GROCERY

Even for founder Lindsey Barrow, it is hard to put on paper everything Lowcountry Street Grocery does on a daily basis.

"We kind of cultivated the idea in 2014," says Barrow. He officially opened the organization in 2017 after a successful crowdfunding campaign in 2016 helped get it off the ground. "I quit my day job to focus on this."

To boil it down to its simplest form, Lowcountry Street Grocery is an organization whose mission is to provide struggling Charleston residents with affordable, high quality food, ideally grown in South Carolina.

Barrow developed his interest in community building through work as a legislative aide in Hawaii, focusing on sustainable agriculture and specifically diabetes there. After his time in Hawaii, he moved back and began working in Charleston restaurants.

"One thing unique to Charleston is that there's no lack of attention to the local food system here. People travel from all over the world to dine here. [But] it felt really unfair when we know what's happening a mile north of these famous restaurants. So it was kind of my idea to connect all of it together in one singular way by making local food accessible to everyone."

Lowcountry Street Grocery employs some unique strategies to achieve their goals. The first is "Nell." Named after Barrow's aunt, Nell is a 1988 B700 Ford School Bus that has been refurbished into a mobile grocery store. The bus circulates Charleston, selling South Carolina produce at regular prices to affluent communities to help sustain the business, and also on a sliding scale and through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to lower income communities in the area.

"These are the folks that need to be prioritized," says Barrow. "They need these tomatoes that were just picked at Johns Island with the highest nutrient density. It's unfair that one area in town has access to everything and the others don't."

While Myers and Barrow had conceptually been thinking about GroceryRX for some time, it was a routine medical checkup that helped ignite the program. Barrow met Heather Rocha, a physician assistant at Fetter Health Care in downtown Charleston, and started talking about Lowcountry Street Grocery's work. Soon, Myers and team were at the Fetter office weekly teaching community classes and selling produce.


As the bus program grew, Olivia Myers, the team's program coordinator and a trained dietician, started receiving inquiries for education on the products they were providing.

"It started with partnerships," she says. "A couple of organizations said they wanted to do a nutrition class and asked if we would be willing to teach it."

GroceryRX is a produce-prescription program that works to provide healthy foods to clients. In partnership with Fetter Health Care, patients that check into a Fetter clinic are screened for food insecurity. If approved, they can be referred to one of two pathways in GroceryRX. The first enables patients to receive customized food boxes for six months that are catered to their needs. The patients are then

re-evaluated to see if the program has improved their situation.

"I get to combine the health care setting with food and bring those together," Myers says. "That's my biggest focus. It's not just health care, but healing people physically and mentally with food."

The second program is more intensive, involving a 12-week course built around nutrition. The first six weeks focus on core nutrition while the second half focuses on cooking.

Participants are also sent food boxes as part of the program. The whole process works as a data-driven loop.

"When you send a referral to a community program, you don't want to just see, "Oh I did that, that's good," Myers explains. "You want to see that there is actual follow-up to that, they are receiving their goods. So they get grocery deliveries every other week for six months. Then they do need to come in and check with their provider again."

COVID-19 put a halt to all of Lowcountry Street Grocery's operations, forcing the team to make some big decisions about the future as their bus was grounded and in-person events went on hold. A familiar face, however, helped provide guidance to their next big step.

"COVID just opened the floodgates," Barrow explained. "We had a farmer coming in with eggs on the bus. Prior to the pandemic he came every week with like 40 dozen eggs. This time he brought hand-truck loads. He was in

tears. “I don't have anywhere to sell these,” he said to me. “If you can help, please do.” We were like, OK, we're doing this. We're opening Community Supported Grocery and accepting everything from everywhere.”

Community Supported Grocery (CSG) became the backbone of the team’s operations, providing a weekly curated food box containing products from not just produce farmers, but also dairy farmers and ranchers.

“We were already doing grocery deliveries, so it was natural to say we're also going to take this to people who have mobility issues and accessibility issues,” Myers says. “These were immuno-compromised people who did not need to be leaving the house, weren't leaving their house. They could still get fresh food.”

Along with grocery deliveries through the program, in 2021 Grocery RX returned to weekly classes, this time via Zoom and call-ins.

“The wonderful thing is that anyone with a phone can just join in,” Myers explains. “So, a lot of people don't have video capabilities, but they can call in. We have a number of people that call in every week. It's not as personable, I think it's harder to learn for sure, but they are there and they are checking in and they are taking active part of their health care. So that's step one.”

# Row by Row

## THE ROGERS FAMILY IS A PEE DEE COTTON-AND-PEANUT POWERHOUSE

BY EVA MOORE PHOTOS BY SAMANTHA DAY AND STEPHANIE FINNEGAN

Driving the back roads outside Bishopville in October and November, you'll see little bits of white fluff drifting along the roadside. This is cotton country, and it's harvest season. Giant rolls and rectangles of harvested cotton dot the fields, bundled in bright pink or yellow plastic. These enormous packages, known as modules, are ready to be transported to cotton gins for processing.

Cotton is unique. Unlike the vast majority of crops, we don't eat it. And it's not an easy crop to grow: The plant requires careful tending throughout the season to make it profitable and successful.

It's a rewarding crop, and a little maddening as well, suggests Gill Rogers.

Of all the crops he's grown, he says, "Cotton is my favorite. You can always do more. You can always do better."

"I've spent my career trying to grow cotton better and I failed," he grins.

That's can't be entirely true, as Rogers is among the most prolific cotton farmers in the state. He and his two sons farm 3,500 acres of cotton in Darlington and Lee counties.

They also grow 3,500 acres of peanuts and operate a peanut buying point, receiving peanuts from other farms as far as 100 miles away and shipping them to a buyer in China. They also roast, season, and package some peanuts for domestic sale under the Gillespie's Peanuts name.

It's a busy operation. And like the overwhelming majority of South Carolina farms, it's a family business. Ninety-six percent of the state's 24,600 farms are family farms, according to the USDA.

"Lee and I run the farm, and Charles and I run peanut buying. And I guess they both run me," Gill says.

OPPOSITE PAGE
Cotton bolls burst open when they're ready for harvest.

TOP LEFT
Gill Rogers pulls apart an immature cotton boll to show the fiber inside.

BOTTOM LEFT
Cotton flowers turn from pale yellow to pink.

Peanuts grow below the ground, and are a common rotation crop for cotton.

Growing both peanuts and cotton makes good scientific sense. When farmers plant cotton year after year on the same land, the soil eventually loses nutrients, particularly nitrogen, creating poor yields. But as agricultural scientist George Washington Carver famously worked to teach farmers, growing legumes such as peanuts puts nitrogen back into the soil. Crop rotation helped save Southern cotton as a crop.

Other scientific advances have changed the cotton industry, too.

Partway through the season, farmers like Gill Rogers apply a growth regulator to convince the cotton plant to stop putting energy into leaves and height and start putting it into developing bolls, the green pods that eventually burst open to reveal hard seeds covered in silky white fiber.

Closer to harvest, farmers spray a defoliant on their cotton fields to remove the leaves. Cotton used to be picked by hand; in many countries it still is. But defoliation allows farmers to run giant machines through the fields to harvest and bale their cotton. The cotton is then sent to a gin, where the seeds are removed, pressed for oil and ground for uses like cattle feed. And the fiber is sent all over the world.

Years ago, the Rogers family used to grow tobacco, with cotton as a smaller sideline. In 1987, they saw the writing on the wall: Tobacco's popularity was flagging, and they would need to switch things up. They turned to cotton, with corn as a rotation crop.

But that wasn't quite the ticket, either. Cotton prices would sometimes be high, sometimes low — Gill says it was "feast or famine." So they diversified, expanding into wheat, soybeans, and peanuts. However, that required too much different equipment.

"It supposedly divided the risk up, but it cost us a lot of money," Gill says. "We had to have more infrastructure. We had to have grain bins, we had to keep wheat and soybeans separate. And then there were the management challenges of managing five different crops versus two."

Eventually they settled on their current balance of peanuts and cotton, with some corn rotated through.

"We're always trying to reinvent ourselves for some reason," Gill reflects. "I don't know how we got here, but this is where we are. It's been an interesting career."

## LEARN MORE ABOUT SC COTTON

Bishopville, South Carolina, is home to the South Carolina Cotton Museum and Lee County Veterans Museum. Yes, there's a three-foot statue of a boll weevil, as well as historic cotton harvesting and spinning equipment, photographs and records, and lots more. Find hours, location and admission info at sccotton.org.

# Garden Variety

## GREG BROWN WANTS HIS CUSTOMERS TO HAVE FUN WITH THEIR FOOD

BY HANNAH ARNDT
PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE FINNEGAN

Greg Brown of Greenleaf Farms in Hopkins, South Carolina, is on a mission to keep food exciting and sustainable.

Having grown up on a hog farm in Hilton Head, Brown has always had a love for farming. After working in the food and beverage industry for a number of years in Atlanta, Georgia, he decided to settle down in the Midlands of South Carolina and return to his roots with a solo farming operation — which has turned into a more than just a business.

"This is a way of life," he says. "If I'm going to do it, I'm going to have fun and experiment. I keep it exciting and find new things to grow every year."

Greenleaf Farms, located on land shared with Carolina Bay Farms, is a small-scale sustainable farm that uses organic measures to grow a wide variety of products. Brown sells his product through participation in local farmers markets and Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs. CSAs are a popular way for consumers to buy local food directly from a farmer while also investing in their agricultural community. They typically consist of farmers offering a certain number of "shares" to the public for purchase through a membership or

Greg Brown grows herbs and vegetables on a small farm in Hopkins, South Carolina, near Columbia.

subscription box service that includes products from their farm.

In Brown's case, this means providing healthy, sustainably grown, and fun food to those investing in his boxes. Greenleaf Farms is home to crops like ginger, turmeric, lemongrass, bok choy, comfrey, oregano, fennel, persimmon, garlic leek, chives, mint, cilantro, arugula, papaws, luffas, and more. In addition to these unique products, Brown also grows some familiar favorites that have a long history in the Southern United States, like sugar cane, sweet potatoes, and collards.

"It's fun to expose people to new things," said Brown. "I want my customers to get a surprise in every box."

Growing up tending to animals and a vegetable garden with his father, Brown learned the importance of land stewardship — not only caring for the land, but also the people that tend to it and the people that are fed from it. Connecting ecological sustainability practices and communities, Greenleaf Farms utilizes leftover material from surrounding businesses and the farm to create nutrient-rich soil. For example, compost comes in from a local horseback riding teacher, square buckets filled with produce waste from local restaurants create the

**ABOVE AND BELOW**
Greg Brown uses leftover material from surrounding businesses and his own farm to create nutrient-rich soil.

perfect vermiculture (the controlled growing of worms) tubs, and residual lemongrass and rice hulls are used for mulch lining between rows of product.

"Without good soil, you don't have anything. My goal is to not waste anything and to give back to the land."

Ensuring good soil is only half of the battle. Like many farmers big and small, Brown faces challenges like weather, supply chain disruptions, and rising production costs. These challenges, mixed with a desire to grow his business and to tap into unique markets, fueled Brown's decision to apply for the Agribusiness Center for Research and Entrepreneurship's curriculum program, operated jointly by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture and Clemson University. He was ultimately awarded $2,500 through ACRE in 2020, money he is using to build a walk-in cooler and expand high tunnel operations.

Building on these additions and improvements, Brown hopes to expand his production of and experimentation with uncommon crops.

"I have a short attention span. More traditional crops might be more profitable, but this is a creative challenge and somewhat competitive. The biggest challenge right now is time and staying ahead, while being able to have more product. My boxes vary month to month with option of full or half share and always have fun surprises."

You can find more information on Greenleaf Farms and local products by visiting certifiedsc.com/members/greenleaf-farms.

Malabar spinach

Luffa

Cactus pear

Bitter melon

Roselle hibiscus

Perennial chrysanthemum

Ginger

Beet

Purple daikon radish

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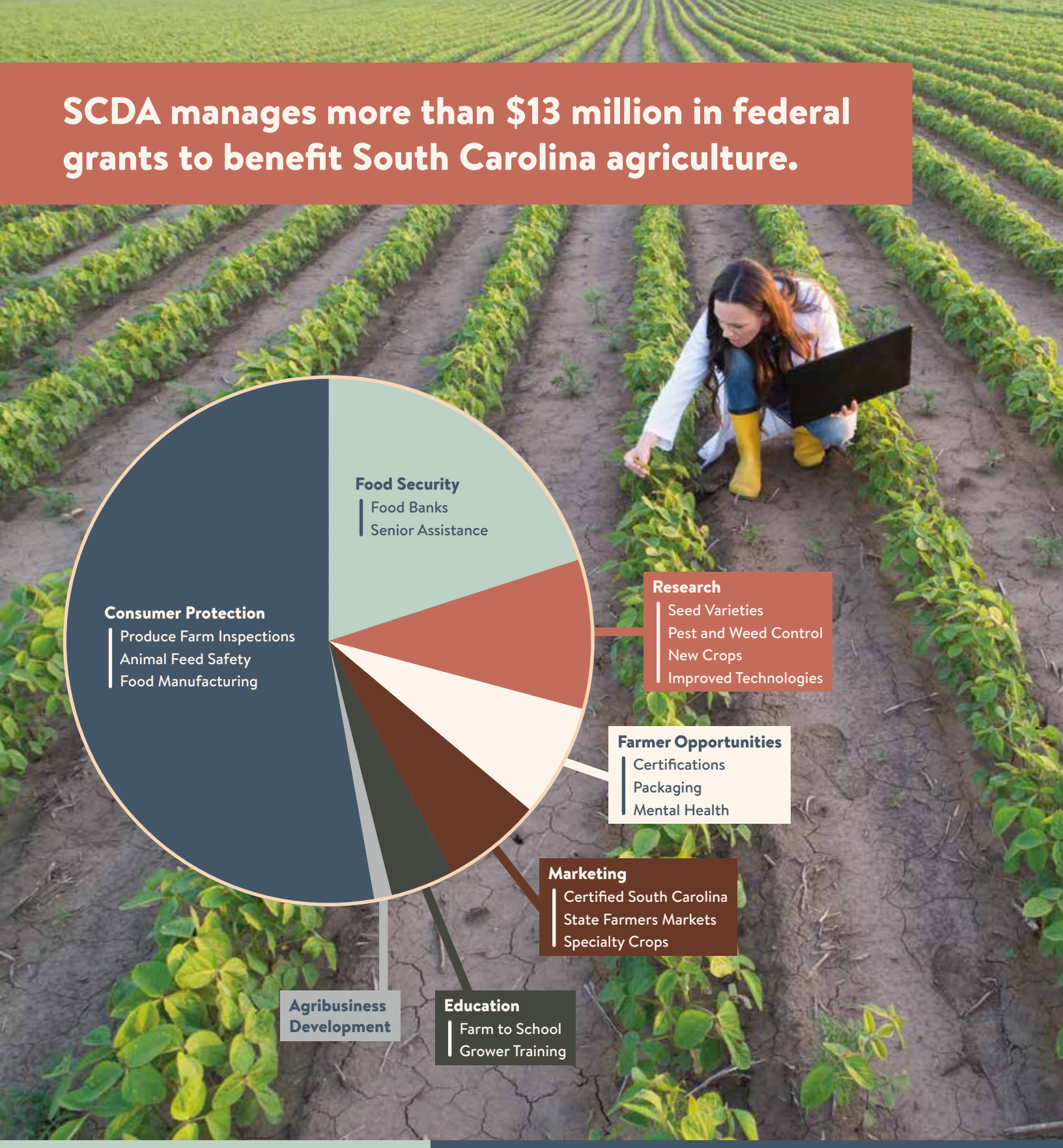


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# MY Farm TO Table Journey

## CHEF BRANDON VELIE ON HOW HE LEARNED THE VALUE OF LOCAL FOOD

BY BRANDON VELIE

When I worked at the Cosmos Club in Washington DC, every Saturday morning I would walk from the club over to the farmers market in Dupont Circle and shop for foods that would become salads for Sunday brunch.

Dupont Circle was a trendy neighborhood, and its farmers market contained a huge array of produce, meats, fish, cheese, flowers, and craft items like homemade soaps and candles, plus on occasion some local artwork for sale. The bounty of items, stories from local farmers, and samples I would try quickly became my favorite part of the week. The chef I was working for at the time was incredibly supportive and would on occasion join me as we would talk about what was in season and what foods would pair well together.

This was my first real exposure to fresh, local farm raised products, and it was a mind- and taste bud-altering experience. And the positive feedback that we received from the club members about how delicious and inventive the salads had become on Sunday brunch was so inspiring that I quickly realized that this was how I wanted to be cooking all the time.

I had my first exposure to kitchens at 14 while working as a dishwasher at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York, where I grew up. After that I worked at a few restaurants in high school as a prep cook, then line cook. I joined the US Marines at 18 and was a Combat Cook for four years before continuing my cooking career after discharge, eventually landing at the Cosmos Club. My wife and I moved to South Carolina in 2002 when I took a job as the Executive Chef at a private club in Aiken. In 2005 we opened

# Two-Tomato Gazpacho

*This is one of my favorite recipes that takes advantage of what is available at your local farmers market. The canned mandarin oranges are an unusual touch, accenting the fresh sweetness of the Certified South Carolina produce. The sugar and red wine vinegar can be adjusted based on taste and the sweetness and acidity of the produce used.*

¼ large red onion, diced
½ red pepper, diced
½ green pepper, diced
1 T chopped garlic
2 yellow tomatoes, diced
2 red tomatoes, diced
1 seedless cucumber, diced
3 T granulated sugar
2 T red wine vinegar
32 oz. V8 juice
1 T chopped fresh cilantro
2 T ground cumin
3 T toasted black and white sesame seeds
10 oz. can mandarin oranges w/ juice
½ cup water
salt and pepper to taste

Place all ingredients in large bowl in order listed and stir lightly for 1 minute. Cover with plastic wrap and place in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. Serve in large, chilled bowls. Serves 10.

Juniper, a farm-to-table restaurant in the small farming community of Ridge Spring, South Carolina.

Anyone who knows me, and my love of food, may be surprised to learn that I grew up as an incredibly picky eater. My go-to favorites were chicken nuggets, hot dogs, and Kraft Mac & Cheese. My dad, in an effort to get me to try other foods, used to offer me a quarter every time I would try something new. Canned beets were one item he convinced me to try, and I was immediately sorry and started to rethink whether a quarter was enough money. So, I was skeptical the first time a farmer cut into a fresh beet and offered me a piece. But I took the chance and literally stood speechless for about 45 seconds trying to wrap my head around what I was eating.

It was absolutely delicious. I quickly bought enough for a roasted beet salad the next day.

Apparently, I had gotten a little too excited because the chef proclaimed that I had enough beets to feed an army and I had better start to think of ways to use them up before they went bad. This was another valuable kitchen lesson for me: Nothing, and I mean nothing, went to waste.

That farmers market changed who I would become as a chef and helped me realize the importance of working directly with the farmers. The people I was buying from on a regular basis would ask how everything was from the week before and we would discuss what I had created with it. From this, I really started to value the collaboration that can happen between a chef and a farmer.

I have since expanded on this idea and now visit the local farms to learn all I can about not just their farming practices but their personal stories so I can not only share their amazing products but also a little bit about who they are.

## SOUTH CAROLINA CHEF AMBASSADORS

Brandon Velie helped create the South Carolina Chef Ambassador program, working with then-Gov. Nikki Haley, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, and the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism to craft a unique partnership that promotes South Carolina culinary excellence. Launched in 2015, the program highlights chefs around the state and their connections to South Carolina's food history, agricultural traditions, and places. Chef Brandon served as part of the initial class of chefs. To learn about the 2022 class of South Carolina Chef ambassadors, visit discoversouthcarolina.com/chef-ambassadors.


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**www.SCFB.org**

Feed safety inspectors are frequently on the road and primarily work from their vehicles.

# Paws ON THE Ground

## A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF A FEED SAFETY INSPECTOR

BY SAMANTHA DAY
PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE FINNEGAN


The South Carolina Department of Agriculture's Feed Lab tests samples of more than 1,000 products a year – ranging from livestock feed to pet treats.

Government regulators keep people safe by inspecting restaurants, produce farms and other food suppliers. But who looks after your four-legged family members and farm animals? If you're in South Carolina, it's the South Carolina Department of Agriculture.

The department's Consumer Protection Division is responsible for testing gas pumps and checking grocery store scales, and even inspecting food manufacturers. Within this division is a six-person team devoted solely to animal feed, including three inspectors who work in the field. Here's a sampling of what these superheroes without the capes are doing behind the scenes for the animals we love.

## MONDAY

A feed safety inspector tends to have exceptional organization skills. Most of their week is planned out ahead of time, though flexibility is a must. Once they throw on their SCDA uniform and lace up their work boots they are off to a feed distributor, manufacturer, or retailer to gather routine samples for the laboratory.

All commercial feed products must be registered annually with SCDA's Animal Feed Safety program. This equals 20,000-plus commercially registered animal feed products a year.

Inspectors look at a product's ingredient list to ensure no harmful or illegal ingredients are listed. They review the label for the required nutritional guarantees, and review any marketing claims made by the brand on the packaging.

"Big-name brands tend to get tested most often because they're at more retail locations across the state," explains Animal Feed Program Manager Austin Therrell.

Each inspector randomly collects 10 product samples. But here's the kicker: These 10 uniform samples could mean about 100 probes of a single lot. This is to ensure that the sample that's tested is representative of the entire lot. Inspecting products is an all-day process with a combination of all that


Tools of the trade include probes, labels, storage containers and informational materials for consumers.

probing and then a substantial amount of writing.

Routine samples are collected every week, and there are three inspectors, which adds up to around 1,000-plus samples a year.

## TUESDAY – THURSDAY

Tuesday begins with a drive to the Consumer Protection Division building at the South Carolina State Farmers Market. The inspectors drop off the samples collected the day before to the scientists at the lab.

Feed products are then tested for their nutritional content and compared to the claims made on the label. Lab staff also measure the salt and mineral content, along with ensuring mycotoxins and heavy metals are not present.

Once the samples are handed off, the inspectors do just what their name suggests: inspect. They schedule inspections at processors, manufacturers, packers, distributors across the state — essentially any place where animal feed is manufactured, stored, or held. The relationships that inspectors have with the owners of these establishments don't mimic the intense dynamic between the Hatfield and McCoy families. Instead, Therrell says, it's more of a partnership with mutual respect for the animals that both parties serve.

Inspectors continue their inspections on Wednesday and Thursday throughout their designated regions of the Palmetto State. With more than 500 South Carolina feed establishments, these inspectors have their hands full.

Therrell says the most common violation that inspectors find is

For minor violations, inspectors might give a manufacturer time to fix the issue and be reinspected, while major violations can trigger stopping sale of the product.

unapproved ingredients. For example, he says, "Some people are surprised to find out that hemp is not allowed in feed products."

All ingredients that are found within animal feed must be scientifically reviewed and approved before they reach your pet's bowl or trough. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) help ensure each ingredient is safe and thoroughly reviewed before being approved and clearly defined.

## FRIDAY

Most of us tend to enjoy an easier workday on Friday. For Feed Safety Inspectors, Fridays are their days to kick back at their desks and write. They close out their inspections and compile a report of their week.

If an issue arises or non-compliance is found, actions vary. For minor violations, inspectors might give a manufacturer a certain number of days to fix the issue and be reinspected, while major violations can require stopping sale of the product or embargoing the product. The Compliance officer follows up on these issues and ensures your pets and animals have safe food to eat.

Equipped with exceptional communication skills and a keen attention to detail, Therrell and his team are prepared to be a resource to help animal owners throughout the state.

"There's an immense responsibility in the job we have to make sure your animals have safe feed, and that's not something we take lightly," Therrell says.

Some Feed Safety Team members: Feed Liaison and Labeling Reviewer Bernadette Mundo, AFRPS Coordinator Lorey Bell, Program Manager Austin Therrell, and Feed Inspector Oliver Harrelson.

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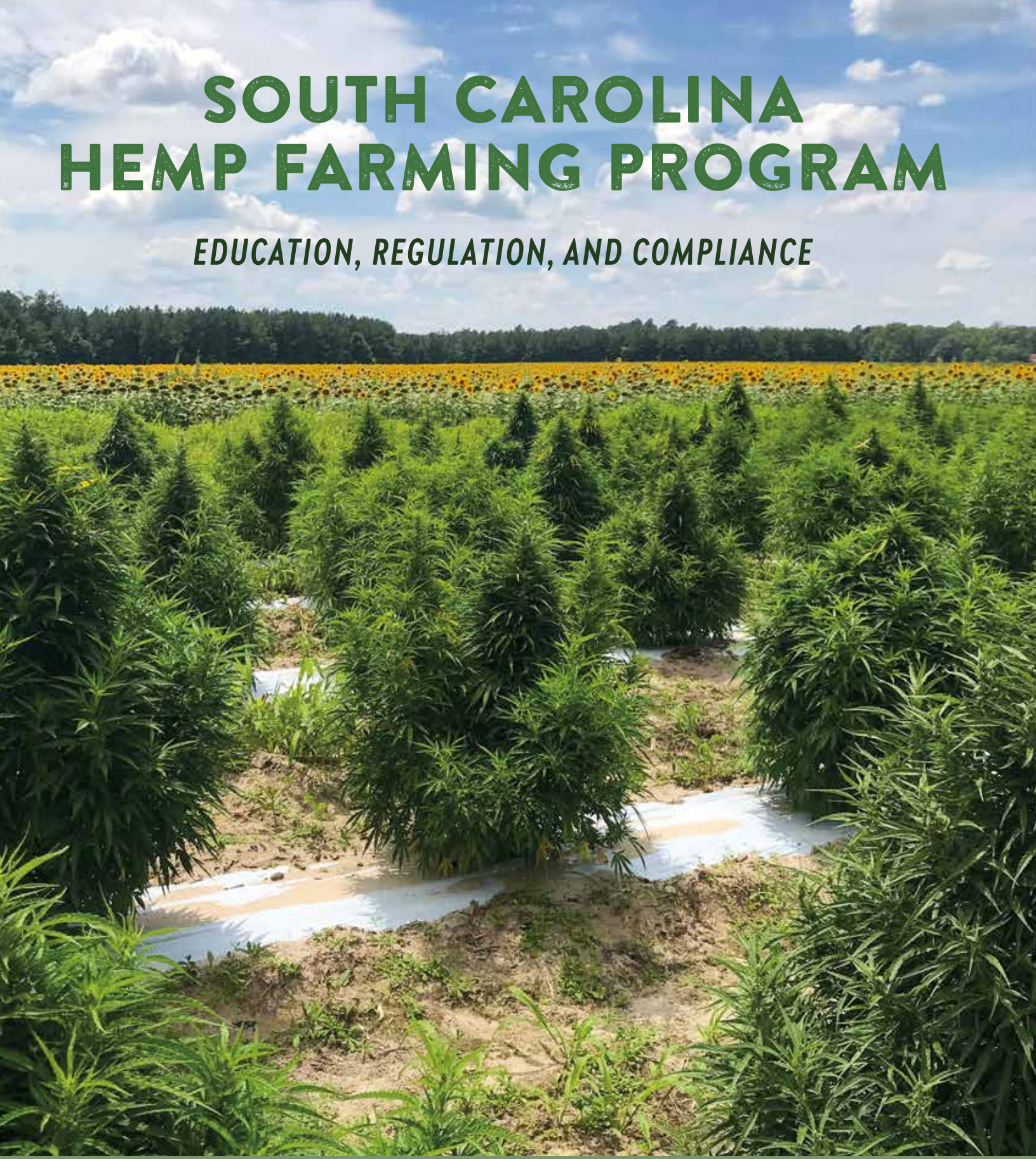

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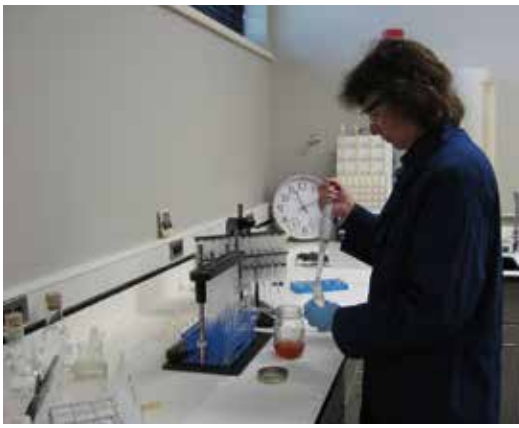

To learn more, visit **agriculture.sc.gov** and select the careers link at the bottom of the page.

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# Lavender Fields Forever

## TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES BEAT SC'S HEAT, HUMIDITY

BY APRIL BLAKE

Twin Creeks Lavender grows lavender on a 100+ year-old family-owned farm in Upstate South Carolina historically used for cattle.

Samantha Day

Does the idea of lavender fields conjure up mental images of pastel landscapes in the Provençal countryside, gentle light purple tips waving in the breeze among a sea of sage green? These days, there's no need to travel to France to revel in the gentle and heavenly scented experience of a lavender farm. Right here in South Carolina, lavender can not only just grow, but thrive, thanks to improved lavender varieties and better planting methods that can handle the heat and humidity that is life in our state.





Traditionally, lavender has required cool and dry climate conditions, which made it much more suitable to grow in France, and specific microclimates around the United States.

"It's kind of a finicky little plant," said Derek Garrett, co-owner of Elf Leaf Farm in Landrum.

The harshly hot, heavy rainfalls and generally wetter conditions associated with South Carolina and much of the deep South can make lavender plants contract root rot, which kills the plants, and ruins the soil too.

Like many other aspects of life and farming, technology and scientific experimentation have paved the way for things that were once impossible to be much more possible. Lavender plants now get tested at Clemson University to check for root rot before they even get close to the lavender fields and have a chance to contaminate the soil. Then the lavender plants get quarantined for weeks at a time, even after testing, to ensure they do not get planted with pre-existing root rot as much as possible.

"We combat root rot with an antifungal product that we drench the rows of lavender with when it starts to cool down, and that keeps things pretty healthy," Garrett said. "We have some annual loss every year due to so much rain but there's nothing we can do about it — yet we still had a spectacular year for volume."

Other experimentation with how the plants are put into the ground, or rather not put into the ground, has seen promising results too. Garrett pointed to experiments with planting the lavender in a rock substrate, so there's no soil at all.

Elinor Poole of King George Lavender Farm in Barnwell also uses the concept of space and technology to help her lavender plants thrive.

"We space the plants so there is air movement between them to help with the humidity," she said. "We also have rain-sensing irrigation, which is also more economical, efficient, and only runs when it needs to."

The Upstate of South Carolina is best suited for lavender farming, with its slightly lesser heat and humidity.

The lavender, once successfully grown, can be used in many different ways to generate profit for the farmers who grow it. Lavender farmers count on these multiple income streams. The most visible way they make money is



Harvested bundles at Elf Leaf Farm. Lavender farms' business models may include agritourism, photography, selling whole lavender, selling lavender products, and more.

through agritourism and u-pick days. People will come from miles around to inhale the fresh, perfumed air that's just life as usual for a lavender farmer. Visitors can snip their own lavender bundles during the peak season of April through June, photographers can pay to use the fields as backdrops for photographs, and the farmers can sell products made with their lavender to those eager to take home a whiff of the gentle, intoxicating scent.

Those products are another revenue stream. King George Lavender sells farmhouse decor and lavender products including lotion linen spray, air serum, a line of bath products, bug spray, flea and tick powder, neck pillows, and even lavender-stuffed teddy bears. Finally, the lavender left over after these products are made is distilled into essential oil, and even the leftovers from distilling, called hydrasol, can be monetized, too. Poole sells her lavender-scented hydrasol to a local home cleaner who buys it to use as a cleaning product. So while lavender is indeed a finicky plant, every centimeter of the plant can be used to the farmer's benefit.

An additional income stream both King George and Elf Leaf Farms are undertaking is as wedding venues. The views of the lavender farm as well as the relaxing scent will make beautiful backdrops for nuptials, they hope, as both farms are in the middle of building the infrastructure to support these types of events as early as spring of 2022.

Lavender farmers will agree on one thing — it is not a way to get rich.

"It spawned from wanting natural products for ourselves," said Poole. "It's a lot of work, time, and money, but we really feel like lavender is an all-purpose plant and is beneficial in every way." As for Elf Leaf Farm, Garrett said this was his pre-retirement project, and they are getting everything in place now.

Thanks to passion, technology, and science, the beauty and wonderment of lavender fields are closer than ever before. Take a deep inhale and plan a visit to one or more of South Carolina's lavender farms in the spring of 2022 to see it all in action.

## LAVENDER FARMS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

### *Elf Leaf Farm*

141 N. Campbell Road
Landrum, SC 29356

elfleaffarm.com

### *King George Lavender Farm*

490 Daisy Lane
Barnwell, SC 29812

kinggeorgelavender.com

### *Twin Creeks Lavender*

4740 Midway Road
Williamston, SC 29697

twincreekslavender.com

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## Ag Facts

# What's That Crop?

### *A ROADSIDE VISUAL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE*

## SOYBEANS

**APPEARANCE:** Bushy, deep green plants growing close together.
**HEIGHT:** 3 – 5 feet
**PLANTING:** May – July
**HARVEST:** October – December
**MORE:** Before harvest, soybeans plants turn golden, then brown, and dry out, revealing little stalks with pods hanging off them.

## PEANUTS

**APPEARANCE:** Bushy, bright green plants with small round leaves and small yellow flowers.
**HEIGHT:** 2.5 feet
**PLANTING:** April – May
**HARVEST:** September – November
**MORE:** Like soybeans, peanuts are legumes, and the plants have some similarities. Peanuts produce their own nitrogen.

## COTTON

**APPEARANCE:** Open, bushy plant with scruffy dark green and burgundy leaves. Flowers start out pale yellow then turn bright pink. Pale green bolls burst open when ripe, exposing fluffy white innards.
**HEIGHT:** 4 – 6 feet
**PLANTING:** Mid-April – early June
**HARVEST:** September – early December
**MORE:** Before harvest, the plants are sprayed with defoliant and the leaves turn brown and drop off.

## CORN

**APPEARANCE:** Tall, with big leaves splaying out from the stalk at intervals. Distinctive tassels stick up from ears.
**HEIGHT:** 5 – 10 feet
**PLANTING:** March – April
**HARVEST:** June – August (sweet corn); September – November (field corn)
**MORE:** Field corn is left to dry in the field before being harvested with a big machine called a combine. Sweet corn is harvested by hand while the plants are still green.

## COLLARD GREENS

**APPEARANCE:** Large, muted-blue-green plants in the Brassica family.
**HEIGHT:** 1 – 2 feet
**PLANTING AND HARVEST:** Collards can be grown much of the year in SC, but spring and fall crops are common.
**MORE:** South Carolina leads the nation in leafy green production. Collards are a lovely, distinctive blueish green, while greens like mustard are more bright, classic green.

## HEMP

**APPEARANCE:** Slender plants with palm-shaped leaves with sawtooth edges.
**HEIGHT:** 3 – 8 feet
**PLANTING:** April – May
**HARVEST:** September – November
**MORE:** Hemp and marijuana are the same plant: cannabis. Travelers may occasionally see a field of cannabis with a South Carolina Department of Agriculture sign showing the farmer holds a Hemp Farming Permit.

South Carolina Department of Agriculture

MARKET BULLETIN

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Est. 1913

## SC FARMER NAMED SOUTHEASTERN FARMER OF THE YEAR

*BOB HALL OF BUSH N VINE HONORED AT SUNBELT AG EXPO*

BY SUNBELT AG EXPO

Robert "Bob" Martin Hall has been selected as the 2021 Swisher Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year.

Nestled in the hilly Piedmont region of York, South Carolina, is Bush-N-Vine Farm, a fruit and vegetable-growing enterprise owned and operated by Robert "Bob" Martin Hall. His career began 45 years ago on land that's been in his family for a century and a half.

Hall said, "My early love of gardening came from having spent much of my childhood helping my grandfather with his peach orchard and helping my father survey land. A couple of my uncles, one of whom ran a truck farm with peaches and tomatoes, were also great mentors."

After graduating from high school in 1976, Hall enrolled at Clemson University to study horticulture and obtained his B.S. degree in 1980. Meanwhile, two cousins, who were sisters, decided to commit the future of their father's farm to agriculture. Hall's desire to grow crops and directly market fresh fruits and vegetables was the fortunate link to their wish, one that allowed him to begin farming the family land again.

He remembered, "We started Bush-N-Vine Farm then with 75 acres and converted the old 1970s peach packing shed into our retail market stand in York which, over the years, has served us well."

From the 1960s on, after the initial shipping business faded away, the Hall family shifted focus to roadside market sales. Living within an hour's drive of Charlotte, NC, what had been an exclusively agricultural community for most of the twentieth century gradually became a suburban one. In its unique setting, Bush-N-Vine Farm has developed into an agricultural oasis. It's also become a destination point for visitors to enjoy a day in beautiful rural surroundings and sample the farm's tasty bounty.

Bush-N-Vine Farm's land under cultivation has doubled since the early 1980s and now supports three direct marketing fruit stands: The large main one in York is open year round, and the ones in Rock Hill and Lake Wylie are seasonal. Produce is grown in three ways: in open fields, high tunnels, and greenhouses. On the fruit production side, strawberries have been the farm's core crop with 10 irrigated acres yielding 17,500 lbs./acre, 15 irrigated acres of peaches yielding 320–400 bushels/acre, 8 acres of cantaloupe and melons yielding 18,000 lbs./acre, 3 acres of blackberries yielding 9,000–10,000 lbs./acre, 3 acres of blueberries yielding 8,000 lbs./acre.

Vegetables grown at Bush-N-Vine Farm include 10 acres of sweet corn yielding 500 dozen ears/acre and 25 acres of a wide variety of vegetables whose yields vary depending on the crop. These include crowder peas, sugar snap peas, butter peas, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, kohlrabi, cilantro, arugula, summer squash, lima beans, and tomatoes. Fresh market production takes place on 25 acres; high tunnel production accounts for 130,680 square feet housed in fourteen 25' x 400' structures for all-season crops. Greenhouse production, including newly added hydroponic tomatoes, accounts for 44,850 square feet and continues to expand.

*Story continues on page 8*

Bob Hall and Susan Templeton Hall have five children and 13 grandchildren.

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

HUGH E. WEATHERS

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

## CELEBRATING OUR FOOD — PAST AND FUTURE

Blanche and I traveled to Charleston in mid-October for a celebration of Lowcountry food, history and farming featuring Chef Ambassador Kevin Mitchell and put on by Certified South Carolina.

Chef Kevin is a chef-instructor at the Culinary Institute of Charleston, and now he's an author, too. The dinner was the launch for his first book, called "Taste the State: South Carolina's Signature Foods, Recipes, and Their Stories," a collaboration with University of South Carolina professor David Shields.

With that focus on South Carolina food history, you know we had some great farmers in attendance and great Certified South Carolina products on the menu. For the dinner, Kevin paid tribute to Edna Lewis, a famed chef and cookbook author who was chef-in-residence at Middleton Place in the 1980s, and to the African roots of South Carolina food. Needless to say, it was an entertaining evening.

As for the book, I'll let you know what I think of it as soon as Blanche puts it down. We were lucky to have Kevin Mitchell as a Chef Ambassador these past few years and I look forward to seeing what he does next. I'll say the same about Chef Ambassadors Jamie Dunkelis, Jason Tufts and Raffaele Dall'Ezta, who will be wrapping up their terms next month. In January we'll be announcing the 2022 class of South Carolina Chef Ambassadors.

I also had the pleasure of traveling to Moultrie, Georgia a few weeks ago for the annual Sunbelt Ag Expo, where Bob Hall of Bush-N-Vine Farm was awarded the Swisher Sweet Southeastern Farmer of the Year award. It was wonderful to see all the Halls who'd traveled from South Carolina to support Bob – and quite a shout went up when the winner was announced.

Bob is the third South Carolinian to win the 10-state Southeastern Farmer of the Year competition in the past decade. Fruit grower James Cauley won in 2013, and Angus cattle breeder Kevin Yon won in 2018. That's a pretty good rate for our small state.

You can read all about Bob's many successes in the main feature in this issue. I'm just happy to call him a South Carolina farmer.

Whether you're planning a small retreat, a large business conference, board meeting, culinary training, intimate family wedding, or a fun birthday party, the **Phillips Market Center** located at the South Carolina State Farmers Market is the right choice for you. We are conveniently located just outside the heart of South Carolina near the major interstates of I-26, I-77, and I-20. Our Craftsman-inspired architecture reflects a blend of its agricultural roots and the use of natural resources of our state. The **Phillips Market Center** is equipped with audio visual technology, Wi-Fi compatibility, a 3600 sq. ft. multi-purpose hall, teleconference systems, and a fully equipped kitchen.

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## Crop Spotlight

# Among the Luffa Vines

STORY & PHOTOS BY SAMANTHA DAY

You've probably seen (or used) the brightly colored luffas — or bath poufs — that polka-dot the supermarket and grocery store shelves. They're typically made from plastic and are used as exfoliating sponges while also helping increase the amount of suds from soap. But did you know that luffas can also be grown?

Native to South and Southeast Asia, luffa aegyptiaca is a plant species that is a member of the Cucurbitaceae family. They're cousins to pumpkins, squash, and other gourds, which explains why they resemble zucchinis when growing on the vine. If harvested before their fibrous insides form, they can be prepared like their squash-y cousins — and offer a similar taste. The yellow flowers they produce are also edible and make a beautiful garnish to any summer salad. When luffas are allowed to mature, their insides become fibrous and woody.

With their vigorous vines and their rampant nature, luffa plants are resilient. They are also naturally pest resistant and can grow without any help from pesticides. It's not uncommon for luffa vines to grow thick and dense, like kudzu, but because the cold winters kill them off, they are not an invasive species.

Brian Wheat owns and operates Common Joy, a luffa farm located on Johns Island, South Carolina. His luffa plants are right at home in South Carolina's heat and humidity, which mimics the weather in South Asia. Wheat uses regenerative agriculture practices to grow his 100 percent natural, organic, and locally grown luffa sponges.

The 2021 growing season was the biggest one for Wheat yet. These plants are expected to grow for around 200 days before they are harvested. The long growing season allows for the sponges to ripen and dry on the vine. Once the outer gourd-like layer is removed, Wheat soaks his luffas in a mixture of water and bleach to soften and cleanse the sponge. Then they're dried once more, creating luffas that are ready for your shower, kitchen sink, or however you wish to use them.


SOUTH CAROLINA
SPECIALTY
Crop Growers
ASSOCIATION
Working together to improve the marketing and production quality of fresh fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops grown in South Carolina.
For more information and how to join, visit scspecialtycrop.com

## Buying Guide

# Give the Gift of SC

No matter the occasion, South Carolina products are always a great choice. The South Carolina Specialty Food Association's members include candy makers, hot sauce heads and a whole lot in between, while the Certified South Carolina program encompasses much more than fresh produce — you'll find Certified SC soaps, flowers, dairy products, and more.


### ADAMS APPLE

Apple butters and more
Lexington, SC
adamsappleco.com


### KING BEAN COFFEE ROASTERS

Coffee blends
Charleston, SC
kingbean.com


### BEE WELL HONEY

Wildflower honey
Pickens, SC
beewellhoneyfarm.com


### McLEOD FARMS

Mac's Pride fresh peaches
McBee, SC
macspride.com


### BULLS BAY SEA SALT

Sea salts
Bulls Bay, SC
bullsbaysaltworks.com


## MARSH HEN MILL

Carolina Gold Rice, grits and other milled products

Edisto Island, SC

marshhenmill.com


## BURNT & SALTY

Sauces

Charleston, SC

burntandsalty.com

## CAROLINA SOAP WORKS

Goat's milk soaps and lotions

Newberry, SC

carolinasoapworks.com



## MOD SQUAD MARTHA

Dog treats, dressings, more

Charleston, SC

modsquadmartha.com


## CHARLESTON SPICE CO.

Seasoning blends

Charleston, SC

charlestonspice.com

CERTIFIED SOUTH CAROLINA

CERTIFIEDSC.COM

SHOP Local SOUTH CAROLINA

SHOPLOCALSC.ORG

## Support SC Farmers

# Where to Buy Local

### FARMS

**certifiedsc.com**

Search by county and/or farm product to find Certified South Carolina members near you.

### STATE FARMERS MARKETS

The State of South Carolina owns and manages three regional state farmers markets that sell locally grown produce and specialty products, leasing space to farmers, retailers, and wholesalers. The markets sponsor Plant and Flower Festivals in the spring and fall and a variety of events throughout the year. Admission and parking are free.

#### SC STATE FARMERS MARKET

**scstatefarmersmarket.com**

3483 Charleston Highway
West Columbia, SC 29172
803-737-4664
Open daily • Vendor hours vary

#### GREENVILLE STATE FARMERS MARKET

**greenvillestatefarmersmarket.com**

1354 Rutherford Rd.
Greenville, SC 29609
864-244-4023
Monday – Saturday • 8 am – 6 pm

#### PEE DEE STATE FARMERS MARKET

**peedeestatefarmersmarket.com**

2513 West Lucas Street
Florence, SC 29501
843-665-5154
Monday – Saturday • 8 am – 6 pm

### CERTIFIED ROADSIDE MARKETS

**agriculture.sc.gov/certified-roadside-markets**

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture's Certified Roadside Market Program was established in 1972 and currently includes more than 150 markets and farm stands. Because they must meet certain standards, we're confident that the roadside markets in the program are reputable and offer a good supply of South Carolina farm products.

### COMMUNITY BASED FARMERS MARKETS

**agriculture.sc.gov/community-based-farmers-markets**

There are 130 farmers markets across the state, from booming weekend events in bigger cities (Columbia's Soda City Market and Greenville's TD Saturday Market, for example) to smaller markets in rural communities.

### COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS

**agriculture.sc.gov/community-supported-agriculture-csa**

Buying a CSA share gets you periodic farm-fresh products while offering stable income to a local farm. Ask around or visit our website to find one near you.

### SPECIALTY FOODS

**shoplocalsc.org**

Find quality Certified South Carolina products through the South Carolina Specialty Food Association website.

### STORES

Grocery stores are key partners in the Certified South Carolina program. Look for the Certified South Carolina logo where you shop to support your local farmers.

CERTIFIED SOUTH CAROLINA
SOLD HERE
IT'S A MATTER OF TASTE.

### FRESH ON THE MENU

**freshonthemenu.com**

Restaurants participating in the Fresh on the Menu program agree to use at least 25% in-season Certified South Carolina products. Look for the window decal or search our website.

Fresh on the Menu
SC GROWN
CERTIFIED
IT'S A MATTER OF TASTE.


**Visit a State Farmers Market near you all year long for locally grown produce, plants, and seasonal items.**


**SOUTH CAROLINA STATE FARMERS MARKET**
3483 Charleston Highway
West Columbia, SC 29172

Brad Boozer, Market Manager
bboozer@scda.sc.gov
803-737-4664
scstatefarmersmarket.com

**GREENVILLE STATE FARMERS MARKET**
1354 Rutherford Road
Greenville, SC 29609

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